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*4th District Democrat Criticizes Republican Refusal to Fund the "Emergency" Needs Facing America's Families*

**Washington, DC** - Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04) issued the following statement today following her vote in opposition to the Fiscal Year 2010 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act (H.R. 4899). H.R. 4899 passed the U.S. House of Representatives with 114 Democrats and Republicans opposing the war funding bill. Congresswoman McCollum issued the following statement:

"Congress has a responsibility to ensure the economic security of the American people, as well as defend the national security of the nation. This appropriations bill does not adequately meet the needs of the American people, and I will not vote to pass it.

"To my great dismay the funds previously passed by the House to address urgent domestic needs such as securing our borders, preventing 100,000 teachers from layoffs, creating youth summer jobs, and financing Pell grants for higher education have been stripped from this bill by the U.S. Senate.

"After nine years of war and more than \$300 billion of war funds added to our national debt, it is clear that an open ended U.S. military presence in Afghanistan is not acceptable to Afghans or Americans. I believe now is the time for a movement away from an expanded military presence in Afghanistan towards a strategic drawdown of U.S. troops and a refocus on a counter-terrorism strategy to prevent al-Qaeda from again taking root.

"U.S. troops deserve a mission that is clear and achievable so they can return safely home with the knowledge that they have helped to keep America secure and allowed the Afghan people to make their own future. It is now time for the Afghan people to make that future."

*Congresswoman Betty McCollum serves on the House Appropriations and Budget Committees.*

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